



FORT WORTH ORTHOPEDICS

P: (817) 433-3450
Dr. Steven Singleton
Kayla Davenport
Mary Chairez

Postoperative Instructions for Outpatient Elbow Surgery

Your Surgery Included:

Arthroscopic

- Diagnostic
- Debridement
- Contracture Release
- Loose Body Removal
- Synovectomy
- Medial / Lateral Epicondylitis Repair

Open

- Debridement / Contracture Release
- Ligament Repair / Reconstruction
- Biceps Tendon Repair
- Fracture Fixation
- Ulnar nerve Transposition
- Medial / Lateral Epicondylitis Repair

1. **Explanation:** Elbow surgery is commonly done in an 'out patient' setting allowing you to have surgery and return home both safely and comfortably the same day. On occasion, a patient will have nausea or pain severe enough to require overnight hospitalization.

2. **Pain Management:** A cold therapy cuff, pain medications, local injections, and in some cases, regional anesthesia injections are used to manage your post-operative pain. The decision to use each of these options is based on their risks and benefits.

Cold Therapy: You may have been sent home with a cold wrap. This wrap will help relieve pain and control swelling. Use the wrap throughout the day for the first two days and then as needed.

Regional Anesthesia Injections: You may have been given a regional nerve block either before or after surgery. This may make your entire arm numb for 24-36 hours.

3. **Medications:** You were given one or more of the following medication prescriptions before leaving the hospital. Have the prescriptions filled at a pharmacy on your way home and follow the instructions on the bottles. If you need a refill on your medication, please call your pharmacy.

Narcotic Medication (usually Norco or Tylenol # 3): Begin taking the narcotic medication before your elbow starts to hurt. Some patients do not like to take any medication, but if you wait until your pain is severe before you take the narcotic medication, you will be very uncomfortable for several hours waiting for the narcotic to work. Always take the narcotic medication with food.

Phenergan: If you have nausea at home, use this medication as directed.

Antibiotic (Keflex or Cleocin): Depending on the procedure, you may have been sent home with a two-day course of an antibiotic. Take as directed.

4. **Diet:** Eat a bland diet for the first day after surgery.

5. **Activity**: After you arrive at home, elevate the affected extremity for 24 – 48 hours. After the first 24 - 48 hours, slowly increase your activity level based on your symptoms.

6. **Splint or Brace**: If a brace or splint is applied after surgery, keep this on at all times, unless otherwise instructed.

7. **Dressing Change**: Keep your post-operative dressings clean and dry. You will be instructed on how and when to change these dressings.

8. **Showering** You may shower on the _____ day after surgery if the wound is dry and clean, but do not let the wound soak in water until sutures are removed. If a brace or splint is applied, wrap in a plastic bag to bathe.

9. **Exercises**: These exercises will help control swelling and prevent stiffness. You may do the following marked exercises:

- Wrist motion – Move your wrist up and down throughout the day.
- Hand and Fingers – Make a fist with your hand, then relax (such as when squeezing and releasing a tennis ball.)
- Elbow motion – Straighten and bend your elbow.
- Supination / Pronation – Rotate your forearm so the palm of your hand faces up and down.

Your ability to do these exercises will improve as you continue to do them. Do these exercises for 2-5 minutes five times a day.

10. **Physical Therapy**: Physical therapy is an essential component to your recovery from surgery. Unless other instructions are given, you will begin physical therapy on the day after surgery. Mary will coordinate your first appointment. We will work together with the physical therapist to help ensure the best possible outcome.

Your first post-operative visit will be 10-14 days after surgery. If you have any problems, please contact the office at (817) 433-3450 opt # 4.